

Economic Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 3, 2018, 9:00 AM
Minutes

1. Called to Order: At 9:00 A.M. by Trustee Barry.

2. Present: Mayor Ron Gunter, Trustee Harold Barry, Village Clerk Virginia Szymiski, Business/Resident Representative Gregg Pill, Citizen Representative Nancy Martens, Community Development Director Jill Ziegler, Village Planner Joe Hennerfeind, Chamber Executive Director Larry Forssberg, Village Manager Steve May, Business/Resident Representative Bill Kalafut , Business/Resident Representative Doug Carmichael, Deputy Liquor Commissioner Tom Mulhearn, Administrative Assistant Jaime Hofmann.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from October 4, 2017 meeting were motioned for approval by Gregg Pill, Virginia Szymiski seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

5. Old Business Updates - None

6. New Business

A. Trustee Barry gave a brief introduction since he will now be the new Economic Development Committee Chairman. Village Manager Steve May then went on to explain how a new chair is selected and how committees are combined.

A. Overview of 2017 Economic Development activity and metrics

- a. Director of Community Development Jill Ziegler discussed some of the larger projects started in 2017. These projects include BMW expansion, Porsche expansion, Bernas Park, U-Stor-It, and Mayslake Parking Lot.
- b. Director Ziegler continued to discuss new businesses in town which includes 25 new business openings including a new artist gallery, veterinarian, bar and grill, art store, and barbershop in the downtown.
- c. Westmont also had a total of 22 new residential projects including single family residences, duplexes, and additions. Village Planner Joseph Hennerfeind added that Westmont has not seen a duplex trend since 2008.
- d. Chamber Executive Director Larry Forssberg discussed developing a partnership relationship with the dealers such as BMW and Porsche which are moving forward with no financial set up or financial incentive which is unusual for

dealers. Director Ziegler said several businesses have taken advantage of small incentives in 2017. Some small incentives include facade / life safety grants which matches funds of up to \$5,000 for facade, and \$3,000 for life safety. Businesses that took advantage of this program include Urban Vet, Johnny's Blitz, Dolce's and Expression Dance Studio. Grant improvements include fire systems, sprinklers, electric upgrades, signs, front doors, awnings, and new lighting. Forssberg added that in many cases the businesses and the spaces requesting these grants have been vacant for some time and are in need of substantial upgrades in order to be economically viable to lease. Trustee Barry added that these companies do have to wait a year before receiving the grants. It's anticipated that the funds will be exhausted with two ongoing and two upcoming projects. Trustee Barry asked if these grants are going to be extended to the rest of the Village. Director Ziegler said the direction from the Board was that they could do that in the two TIF districts.

- e. Director Ziegler discussed residential and commercial building permit fees and construction costs for the year 2017. The Village brought in about half a million dollars in residential fees and a little over a million dollars in commercial. The construction value added to the community is over 15 million dollars for residential and over 20 million dollars for commercial. She said it's been a great year with some bigger projects such as BMW, Porsche expansion and larger commercial office build outs. Director Ziegler went on to discuss that the number of permits issued decreased from 2016 to 2017, however in 2016 there were separate permits for building, electric, plumbing, and engineering whereas in 2017 the separate permits for one project were combined into one.

B. 2018 Projects and Goals

- a. Forssberg discussed the Oak Brook Hilton project and they expect to see the Natatorium break ground as soon as weather is permitting. There is not a solid date yet for the apartments. The back nine holes of the golf course will eventually be developed into residential. Director Ziegler added that Mary Ann Kaufman is promoting the Hilton project and is very excited. She has created a Facebook page for the Natatorium and is encouraging everyone to follow it. It has been in discussion that she would like to turn Willowcrest Drive into Westmont Drive. Mayor Gunter mentioned that the hotel would be in charge of maintaining Willowcrest Drive since it is a private drive.
- b. Forssberg mentioned that the Pasquinelli office park area is undergoing a substantial amount of remodeling projects. There are many opportunities for further development at this location. In previous years, there were discussions of Mayo Clinic renting a space for an outpatient clinic. Trustee Barry asked how many people would the Rockwell property bring in if it was up and running.

Forssberg said there was some discussion on a second building, and if that is the case, it could bring in a couple thousand people. Director Ziegler mentioned speaking with a developer and why they are attracted to the Pasquinelli area. The developers mentioned the visibility and access to the corridors. Forssberg mentioned restaurants such as Pappadeaux have been very successful. Trustee Barry mentioned that some of the restaurants have been working with the dealerships / local businesses and their company parties. Kalafut asked about the old Clubhouse Inn status and Forssberg replied that it was purchased by Mr. Patel who owns Best Western. Things are moving along with the remodeling project. Gregg Pill said that his occupancy for the last two months has been at an all time high. Trustee Barry also mentioned that the Extended Stay appears full as well. Forssberg mentioned that the Hilton is also having a great year as far as occupancy goes. Planner Hennerfeind mentioned that the Hilton submitted for hotel room renovations recently. Mulhearn discussed the Hilton's plans to re-do the tent area which has generated a lot of revenue. Now they plan to build a solid structure which should help with noise complaints. Mulhearn also mentioned that they now have video gaming on the first floor which will be beneficial for the Hilton's gains as well as the Village.

- c. Forssberg moved onto the Westmont Auto Mile on Ogden Avenue. The dealerships reported a forecast of 2% increase in auto sales, and a market of 17.1 million units this year. Pill asked if there were any updates on the Lincoln dealer and if Westmont was receiving Tesla's sales tax revenue. Director Ziegler replied that it has been confirmed that the sales tax is being reported to the state of Illinois and it's believed that it will come to Westmont versus Oak Brook but that will need to be monitored. Manager May added that it was difficult obtaining the information and figuring out how it was being reported due to the fact of having limited access to the highly confidential information. Trustee Barry asked if Tesla in Westmont was a store versus a dealership and Director Ziegler replied that they are a dealership and have a dealership license. If they were solely a store, their special use could be revoked for that location. Forssberg stated that research is being done to make sure that sales tax is being collected from these dealerships. Director Ziegler responded that the state can go back several months to recoup any money that was not received. Carmichael asked if Tesla was still leasing the lot on Plaza Drive. Forssberg responded that yes, they are working with U-Stor-It to rent the lot for vehicle storage. He mentioned that one common issue with these dealerships is finding parking. They have to work with other property owners in the area and work out a rental agreement to park inventory. Pill asked about the Lincoln dealership since it appears that sometimes the location looks boarded up. Director Ziegler responded that they are looking to move forward with their

renovation. It was temporarily on hold, but should be moving forward. Forssberg stated that the business is under a lot of pressure from Lincoln headquarters. He stated that we expect to see further remodels and expansions from other dealerships along Ogden Avenue.

- d. Forssberg discussed the Downtown Central Business District success with only 12 vacant sites available. New major projects are in discussion for Downtown Westmont with the potential for a start time of early 2019, depending on financing, TIF funding, and site constraints. Pill asked for an update on 1 N. Cass Avenue and Director Ziegler replied that the Village is currently working with its TIF consultant regarding the financial aspects of the project and then the parking lot with all the engineers. Coordination will have to be conducted with ComEd as well. Pill asked if the Village believes this project will have positive or negative feedback. He also asked if this project will be similar to the Hilton, in the sense that it will require numerous hearings in order to reach a final decision. Director Ziegler replied the general feedback is excitement and positive. She stated that the height will definitely be the big issue. Kalafut added that the height of the building, eight stories, was something that was often brought up. Forssberg stated that downtown business owners love the concept because it will obviously bring in more business for the downtown area. Trustee Barry would like to see Downtown Westmont develop this year because the surrounding communities are developing and nearing completion but Westmont has not yet broken ground. Forssberg replied that something that is steering developers away is the complexity, obstacles, and logistics requirements that are more cumbersome than other towns. Trustee Barry added that the Village should have multiple backup options when developers are interested in a property in the Westmont Downtown area, in order to avoid the obstacles that are often presented. Director Ziegler stated that there was a previous developer interested in 1 North Cass, but when they decided to back out, Gammonley jumped in. She stated that the Village is constantly trying to reach out to developers to schedule walk throughs on sites in hopes of gaining their interest. Trustee Barry asked what entices a developer to choose to develop in Clarendon Hills, rather than an open site in Westmont. Director Ziegler responded that demographics are a big factor, along with property owners, or even school districts. Forssberg discussed that assemblage is one of the main challenges the Village faces when trying to work with developers to choose a site in Westmont. He stated that we are still growing our TIF fund as well. Planner Hennerfeind inquired on how other communities have assembled properties through the use of a non-profit entity, and what those triggers or threshold may be. Forssberg replied the Village is willing to make purchases with intentions of long term goals. The Village would need to be very aggressive

in terms of anything presented for approval, as it must fit the long term plan and vision. Property acquisition costs a lot of money, but the ultimate question is whether or not the Village is willing to be landlords for a number of years. Forssberg said that one common goal for developers is to be as close to the train tracks as possible. He said that the last property that was purchased, Mariano's, turned out to be very successful. Kalafut discussed the importance of talking with property owners that could be possible assemblages more than once because things can change over time. Forssberg stated that they encourage property owners to have appraisals done in order to understand the values on their properties. Trustee Barry stated that the Village could conduct surveys on the downtown businesses to determine if any businesses would be willing to sell their property. Having this information and the potential numbers that the businesses are valued at would be beneficial. Kalafut responded that some incentives should be presented, including offering alternative locations for these businesses. Trustee Barry stated that when the Village has more TIF money, there will hopefully be more flexibility as well. Forssberg stated that this process would be a multi-layer negotiation.

- e. Forssberg opened discussion regarding South Westmont Business District and its great potential for new projects. There is a lot of work that can be accomplished there. Cass Avenue and 63rd Street has a lot of activity occurring. The State of the Village addressed that developer, who is working on a couple of anchor tenants and restaurant paths at this location. An announcement is anticipated in the late spring. Forssberg discussed the Tap House Restaurant closing down as of New Year's Day. There are many vacant storefronts in that area and the Village is hopeful that will be developed in the near future. Trustee Barry mentioned that one ripple effect from the South Westmont Business District being vacant is that the Downtown Westmont businesses are now booming and fuller which is nice to see.
- f. Director Ziegler moved onto joint department projects that support economic development projects. One example is addressing property landscaping. Existing businesses are expected to maintain their approved landscaping plans and new landscaping regulations are in effect for new businesses. Several corporate businesses had to be taken to court due to them not upstanding their landscaping requirements. By enforcing this among the commercial corridors, the Village is creating consistent landscaping and benefiting the appeal to the town. Other beautification projects include the railroad corridor to create an appealing view along the train tracks.
- g. Planner Hennerfeind discussed the encouragement of traditional blade signs in Downtown Westmont. Blade signs create more visibility for people getting off the

train. Kalafut mentioned that it makes it much easier to spot from the street. Director Ziegler mentioned some business owners focusing on promoting through social media. Carmichael asked if the blade signs would fall under the facade grants. Director Ziegler responded yes they would.

- h. Director Ziegler talked about moving forward with plans for new Westmont gateway signage. There are plans for three different signs located at Cumnor Road and Ogden Avenue, across from the Hilton, and at 67th Street and Cass Avenue. The intent is to move forward with these signs in the spring. There will also be another sign incorporated at 63rd and Richmond to correspond with a detention beautification plan.
- i. Director Ziegler moved onto discussing the early stages of the Downtown streetscape. This is a long term goal for the Village. She said that they don't want to spend too much effort on the project until 1 N. Cass Avenue is finalized.
- j. One last goal that Director Ziegler mentioned is constructing a Geographic Information System (GIS) project that will allow the Village to visualize, question, analyze, and interpret key community data to understand. Some examples she discussed included showing available properties, locating large task generators, showcasing statistics among many other things.
- k. The next meeting will be scheduled for March 7th, 2018, as the meetings will now be bi-monthly. However, if there is a business that is trying to fast track then the meeting will be scheduled for an "off" month.

7. Adjourn: Meeting motioned to adjourn at 10:30 a.m.: all in favor.